

# **Trump Shutdown Stories: Americans Are Paying the Price for President Trump's Temper Tantrum Over the Border Wall**

**As the Trump shutdown stretches into its third week, the negative impact on federal employees, government contractors, and Americans across the country continues to grow. Republicans are once again using a government shutdown as a strategy to achieve what they otherwise cannot through the democratic process, and they are harming the livelihood, morale, and mission of civil servants, small businesses, and others as a result. Here's a look at what some of those Americans are saying about the Trump shutdown:**

## **FEDERAL EMPLOYEES**

**Leisyka Parrott, Furloughed Employee, Bureau of Land Management, California:** “Her furlough had a sobering effect on their holiday celebration. ‘I definitely went really light on it this year,’ Parrott said. ‘I explained to my son that our financial future is uncertain.’ ... Parrott... isn’t taking it for granted that she and other furloughed workers will get back pay, as they did after previous government shutdowns. ‘It’s scary,’ she said. ‘I do live paycheck to paycheck.’ Gas isn’t cheap, so Parrott stays home as much as she can. With rent and car payments, she doesn’t have much wiggle room in her family budget. ‘I already live pretty frugally,’ she said.” [AP, [1/4/19](#)]

**Donald Mihalek, 20-year Secret Service Veteran, District of Columbia:** “They are asking you to put your life on the line and not paying you — it’s ridiculous...Morale is a serious issue...This is an incredibly stressful job that requires your full attention, and if you are standing there thinking about your mortgage, or your credit card bills, or the fact that you are burning through your savings, you are distracted, you not able to give 100 percent.” [New York Times, [1/7/19](#)]

**Daniel A. Sobien, Furloughed Meteorologist with the National Weather Service, Florida:** Daniel “is living on savings, said that federal workers are ‘tired of being political pawns.’ ... ‘I realize that unfair things happen to people all the time,’ he said, ‘but it really is unfair that because of politics, government employees have to shoulder the burden.’” [NY Times, [1/3/19](#)]

**Krystle Kirkpatrick, Furloughed IRS Employee, Utah:** “...She’s already thinking about signing up to be a plasma donor to earn extra cash. That would bring in \$200. ‘It’s not okay with me for my job to be used as a bargaining chip when people on either side don’t get what they want and they can’t come to an agreement,’ she said. ‘I just want to work.’” [Washington Post, [1/6/19](#)]

**La-Shanda Palmer, Transportation Security Administration Officer Working Without Pay, Pennsylvania:** “‘I don’t think anybody who works for the government is worried about if this wall gets built or not... They want to go back to work.’ She was concerned about paying her bills and racking up late fees, and providing for her family. She said she called her utility company hoping for an accommodation; she did not get a break.” [NY Times, [1/3/19](#)]

**Ray Coleman Jr., Corrections Officer at a Federal Prison, Florida:** “They have to realize that this affects everyday people...It affects the boots on the ground. To me, it’s like a political chess game that they’re playing, and we seem to be pawns.” [NY Times, [1/3/19](#)]

**Kutonya King, Correctional Counselor at a Federal Prison, Georgia:** “‘Right now, the stress level is at 1,000,’ [she] said. Like other corrections officers, Ms. King said she was concerned about the safety of the inmates and of her fellow workers, who will have more and more to occupy their minds if the shutdown drags on.” [NY Times, [1/3/19](#)]

**Nora Brooks, Furloughed Customer Service Representative, IRS, Pennsylvania:** “The 61-year-old Philadelphia native is a customer service representative for the Internal Revenue Service. She loves helping taxpayers navigate the IRS, including getting their refunds... For the past 13 days, she’s been furloughed, worrying about whether she’ll need to seek a second job. The agency requires pre-approval to avoid conflicts of interest, but there’s no one in the office to sign off... She stayed up until 3 a.m. Wednesday figuring out which bills needed to be paid and which could wait. The agency gave employees a letter explaining the furlough to creditors, but ‘it means absolutely nothing to them,’ she said. ‘You try not to freak out, but I don’t have any control over what’s going to happen next month. I’m second guessing. Should I have had a whole nest egg? Well, no, my pay doesn’t allow for that,’ she said.” [AP, [1/4/19](#)]

**Mike Gayzagian, Transportation Security Administration Officer Working Without Pay, Massachusetts:** “It’s a bizarre situation to be in, where you know you have to go to work but you’re not getting paid... As a federal employee, we’re not supposed to be political... This is not our fight, but we’re being used as pawns... People can’t work in an industry that’s at risk of shutting down once or twice a year.” [AP, [1/4/19](#)]

**Tomas Kaselionis, Employee at the Federal Emergency Management Agency Working Without Pay, Northern Mariana Islands:** “For me, it’s do I consider a car payment or do I pay the gas bill or the phone bill?” said Mr. Kaselionis, who is working on typhoon recovery for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, unpaid and far from home in the United States commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. “Those are conversations within the next week that I have to have with my wife.” [NY Times, [1/3/19](#)]

**Brian Turner, Transportation Security Administration Officer Working Without Pay, Pennsylvania:** ... “He has for six years enjoyed being ‘the last line of defense’ for people getting on airplanes. He endured a 16-day shutdown in 2013... ‘I love working for the country,’ he said. But, he added, ‘I can’t go two months without a paycheck.’” [NY Times, [1/3/19](#)]

**Rebecca Maclean, Furloughed Housing Program Specialist, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Pennsylvania:** “Maclean, 41, said her family is trying to cut back on expenses. They stayed home for a movie night instead of going to a theater. Instead of takeout dinners, they eat leftovers... ‘I don’t know why they want to use 800,000 government employees to make a point,’ she said.” [AP, [1/4/19](#)]

**Justin Tarovisky, Corrections Officer, West Virginia:** “This time, it’s going to hurt a lot more because of the time of year it is... We work in a tough environment... Not only does it linger in the back of your mind, it kind of drives morale down a little bit.” [USA Today, [1/1/19](#)]

**Scott Reyna, Former Air Traffic Controller and Husband of Transportation Security Administration Employee Working without Pay:** “‘We’re going to have to trim some fat and see how long we last,’ said. She isn’t being paid during the shutdown, even though she continues to work. ‘I’m still getting my pension, so we’ll be living on that and credit cards until they’re maxed out... After that, I have no idea.’” [Huffington Post, 1/4/19]

**Amanda Wagner, Furloughed Branch Chief, Securities and Exchange Commission, District of Columbia:** “‘The uncertainty is scary... Frankly, I think it’s going to affect us if it lasts much longer. Then I think we will have some cash-flow issues,’ she said.” [AP, [1/4/19](#)]

**A. Ashley Tabaddor, Furloughed Immigration Judge, California:** “It’s indefensible to not appreciate the role and responsibility that there is to make sure the government runs smoothly.” [NY Times, [1/3/19](#)]

**Ryan Baugh, Employee in the Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security, District of Columbia:** “I think one day of a shutdown is too much... As it goes on, the effects will be more strongly and widely felt.” [USA Today, [1/1/19](#)]

## **BUSINESSES WITH GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS & THEIR EMPLOYEES**

**Daniel Moragne, Federal Contractor, Louisiana:** “Daniel... is, at the age of 67, wondering if he’ll lose his apartment if the federal government doesn’t get its act together... ‘If I can’t pay my rent, they will probably move to evict me, and I’d be without a place to stay. ... I might be able to stay with my brother who lives here in town. He’s fairly close. But that’s not a given,’ he said. ‘I don’t know. ... I just wish they’d do their job.’” [Huffington Post, [1/8/19](#)]

**Julie Burr, Federal Contractor, Missouri:** “Some contractors are turning to other means to make up for the lost income, like taking extra shifts at a second job. Julie Burr, an administrative assistant for the Department of Transportation in Kansas City, said she doesn't expect any compensation for the time she's been out of work during the shutdown and that she can't even get paid for the two weeks before it started because there's no one to process her time sheet. She said she's taken extra shifts in her side job... ‘I'm a single mom ... we aren't a two income family or anything. It's just me, and I'm kind of trying to make things meet and if it comes to the point of selling items in the house I'll do that,’ she said.” [ABC News, [1/2/19](#)]

**Chris Erickson, Federal Contractor, Utah:** “The father of three from Salt Lake City will then crack into his savings, and he’ll likely postpone a 14<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary trip with his wife to a cabin... ‘It feels like contractors are forgotten in the mix,’ he said. ‘Congress issues back pay for the government employees, and long-term contractors are ignored.’ ... Erickson blames the shutdown on Trump and his demand for a border wall. ‘One can argue over the merits of border security,’ he said. ‘But if you really think about it, walls are pretty ineffective.’” [AP, [1/4/19](#)]

**Greg Seymour, Federal Contractor, Nevada/Utah:** “Archaeologist Greg Seymour loves his job in the Great Basin National Park... ‘I'm working on a historic orchard that was planted in the 1880s,’ he says... ‘They sent e-mails out letting all of us know that work for them that we're furloughed until further notice,’ says Seymour. What's more, Seymour has little hope of being compensated for all the time he's being furloughed from his \$35-an-hour job... In this case, since I don't work, I don't get paid. So I'm out of luck.’” [NPR, [1/7/18](#)]

**Joe Pinnetti, Federal Contractor, Massachusetts:** “The shutdown has already upended Joe Pinnetti's plans for finishing his bachelor's degree in information technology while working days as an IT contractor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in western Massachusetts. Pinnetti has been unable to perform his \$22-an-hour job since the shutdown began. ‘It's going to be rough — I'm digging deep into my savings right now,’ says Pinnetti. ‘The problem is I'm already having to sacrifice things to do so: I might have to take a semester off from school to rebuild my savings.’” [NPR, [1/7/18](#)]

## **OTHER BUSINESSES WHO RELY ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR BUSINESS**

**Andrew Rickabaugh, Small Business Owner, Alabama:** “When Andrew Rickabaugh and his brother-in-law decided to start a restoration business last year in Huntsville, Alabama, they reached out to the Small Business Administration to guarantee a loan to help them buy equipment. The process was going smoothly – Rickabaugh said he expected approval around Christmas – until the shutdown hit. The Small Business Administration guaranteed more than \$30 billion in loans to companies in the fiscal year that ended in 2017, but processing of most loans was suspended when the agency closed. Rickabaugh couldn’t reach SBA officials in Alabama. ‘We’re having to do things a little differently than maybe we had planned,’ said Rickabaugh, whose company, Rick-N-Ball Restoration, fixes damage caused by water, mold, smoke and other hazards. ‘It’s unfortunate that the inability of politicians to come to an agreement (means) people like us ... pay a price.’” [USA Today, [1/1/19](#)]

**Sam Samhouri, Owner of City Cup Café, California:** “Sam Samhouri’s corner café in Oakland, California, sits on what might normally be considered a prime piece of real estate: directly across the street from an 18-

floor office building. The problem for Samhouri is that the campus that supplies most of his customers is the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building. That means many of his lunchtime regulars have been furloughed by the partial government shutdown in its second week. ‘There’s nobody there,’ said Samhouri, whose City Cup café employs three people.” [USA Today, [1/1/19](#)]

**Tom Christopulos, Director of Community and Economic Development, Utah:** “‘The lunches that are missed and the shopping that is missed, people are staying at home, and that really hurts our small-business community.’... He expects the town will take a hit on its weekly sales tax revenue of \$314,000, which could delay parks and roads projects.” [Washington Post, [1/6/19](#)]

**Marcy Rizzi’s, Bookstore Owner, Utah:** “The shutdown ‘definitely has an impact,’ said Rizzi, owner of Booked on 25th, as she managed an empty store at lunchtime on Friday. Other shopkeepers she knows are ‘more liberal leaning,’ so they already had misgivings about the government under Trump, she said. But now that [President Trump] is ‘willing to impact local, everyday citizens over a wall? You hear people [complaining] about that.’” [Washington Post, [1/6/19](#)]

**Chris Zenger, Owner of Great Harvest Bread Co., Utah:** “[O]ne of the closest restaurants to the federal building, estimates his sales have dropped by half. The lunch rush used to last an hour. Now, it’s 20 to 30 minutes. ‘My mood is a little worried but still staying positive,’ he said. He used to grumble when the parking lots were packed with working government employees because his customers couldn’t find open spots. Now he wishes the lots weren’t so empty. ‘Everyone has a little anger towards the government because of stupid decisions they make,’ he said. ‘People still need to work and to make an income. It just doesn’t seem fair or right.’” [Washington Post, [1/6/19](#)]

**Justin Cox, CEO & Founder of Atlas Brew Works, District of Columbia:** “The team at Atlas Brew Works prepared their special spring release the same way they do with every new beer. Late last year, they started fermenting, had a couple taste tests, and finally—the last step before canning the brew—they sent the design for the beer’s label out to the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau. Because of the government shutdown, the process halted there. Now the Ivy City brewery is stuck with a whole tank of IPA brewed with fresh apricots that may never hit shelves. ‘It’s fermenting, currently,’ says Justin Cox, Atlas Brew Works’ CEO and founder. ‘That will have to sit in our tank.’ ... “There’s an opportunity cost of having beer sitting in the tank which we could otherwise have packaged, that’s a bottleneck in our production,” Cox says. It’s especially frustrating, he says, because “we spent the 4th quarter of 2018 planning what we’re going to release, our recipes, and marketing plans for new beers. Now we’re trying to execute that plan but we’re in a holding pattern.” [DCist, [1/7/19](#)]

**UNIONS AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS ARE ALSO JOINING THE CALLS FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP TO END THE TRUMP SHUTDOWN AND ARE WARNING ABOUT THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF A PROLONGED GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN**

**J. David Cox, President of the American Federation of Government Employees:** “Requiring [federal employees] to work without pay is nothing short of inhumane. Positions that are considered ‘essential’ during a government shutdown are some of the most dangerous jobs in the federal government. They are frontline public safety positions, including many in law enforcement, among other critical roles. A substantial number of those working without pay are military veterans. Our nation’s heroes, AFGE members and their families deserve the decency of knowing when their next paycheck is coming and that they will be paid for their work.” [Statement, [12/31/18](#)]

**David Borer, General Counsel for the American Federation of Government Employees:** “A month into this, we’re going to see people start to get evicted and their cars start to be repossessed.” [Washington Post, [1/4/19](#)]

**Captain Joe DePete, President of the Air Line Pilots Association, International:** “On behalf of the 61,000 pilots of the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), I am writing to urge you to take the necessary steps to immediately end the shutdown of government agencies that is adversely affecting the safety, security and efficiency of our national airspace system... The nation's airspace system is a complex transportation network that involves government and industry partnerships to function properly, and the disruptions being caused by the shutdown are threatening the safe operations of this network... (the) pressure these civil servants are facing at home should not be ignored... At some point, these dedicated federal employees will encounter personal financial damages that will take a long time from which to recover, if at all.” [CNN, [1/7/19](#)]

**Letter to Lawmakers from the Federal Postal Coalition:** “Like most Americans, federal employees have financial obligations that cannot be placed on hold and many cannot afford to be locked out of their jobs or go without their paychecks. Delayed payments have a real economic cost – interest charges, late fees, lowered credit scores, loss of trust from creditors or landlords. Federal workers should not be forced to do chores for their landlords – as suggested by the Administration – instead of working for the American people.” [Letter to Lawmakers, [1/3/19](#)]

**Paul Rinaldi, President of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association:** “I don't know how long they're going to stay on the job if they're not getting a paycheck...” [USA Today, [1/8/19](#)]

**Tony Reardon, President, National Treasury Employees Union:** “As this shutdown drags on, federal workers are becoming increasingly worried about when they will receive their next paycheck and how they will be able to pay their mortgage, rent, student loans and credit card bills... We are further concerned that some in the administration and in Congress do not recognize what it means for employees to go without pay... Shutdowns are hardest on those with the least means, who cannot float government purchases and live on savings while they go without several paychecks.” [Letter to Lawmakers, [1/3/19](#)]

**Mary Kay Henry, President of Service Employees International:** “Working families—Black, white and brown—want a government that is open and working to improve their lives. President Trump and his Republican Congressional allies have completely ignored the message voters sent them last month by refusing to compromise and shutting down part of the federal government over his border wall. America is a loving and accepting country where we put families first, treat people seeking safety in our country with compassion, and respect all people, regardless of our differences. This political stunt flies in the face of everything our flag stands for... The Trump administration and Congress must respect the priorities of working people who voted for good jobs, affordable healthcare and an economy that works for all Americans—not a shutdown.” [Statement, [12/21/18](#)]

**There is no reason to keep the government shut down while discussions take place on how best to secure our borders. It's time for President Trump and Congressional Republicans to stop holding the government hostage, and instead work with Democrats to reopen government and end this Trump shutdown.**